

CONNECTICUT
FARMLAND
T R U S T
PRESERVING WORKING LANDS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

TO: Members of the Environment Committee
FROM: Henry N. Talmage, Executive Director
DATE: March 12, 2010
RE: **Testimony on RB #5417**

I am writing to express the Connecticut Farmland Trust's support for Sections 1 & 2 of RB #5417 "An Act Concerning Open space and The Creation of Trails for All-Terrain Vehicles".

The Connecticut Farmland Trust is the state's only private, non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to the preservation of working farmland. We hold agricultural conservation easements on privately owned farms and assist farm families throughout the process of protecting their land. The Trust is a member of the Working Lands Alliance coalition.

CFT supports Section 1 of RB #5417 as it provides for a registry of protected land that does not currently exist and would be beneficial to all parties interested in farmland preservation. An on-line registry as proposed would provide information that would be helpful in the monitoring and stewardship of protected land as well as provide a common set of data that could be used to plan for future preservation.

Section 2 of RB #5417 provides a mechanism for local municipalities to initiate a conveyance tax on the transfer of real property to be used for local environmental priorities. Often state and federal funds are available for preservation projects but require local matching funds. Many more municipalities would participate in farmland preservation if they had a source of revenue as provided in RB #5417. Dedicated conveyance taxes have been used successfully in other states to fund important environmental conservation and we believe that such a program could be important in Connecticut.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Henry N. Talmage
Connecticut Farmland Trust